carried out after a planarization process and before an etching process, as set forth in the Grieger abstract noted by the Examiner and throughout Grieger. More particularly, the Grieger abstract reads as follows: "Washing a microelectronic substrate with an ozonated solution following planarization and proceeding removal of a native oxide layer through acid etching." Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's characterization of Grieger as "disclos[ing] the method of planarizing a surface by introducing ozonated solution onto the surface (Abstract)" is incorrect.

Grieger further fails to teach or suggest a method of planarizing a surface by directing onto said surface an aqueous solution containing ozone and causing relative motion of said surface and a polishing pad in contact therewith. As remarked above, Grieger simply teaches a method of washing a substrate, which method is carried out after a planarization process. The washing method of Grieger involves dipping substrates into a bath and rinsing them upon removal from the bath, or spraying the substrate with solution. (See Grieger, column 2, lines 5-17 and column 3, lines 53-55.) This simple washing method of Grieger is explicitly stated as being separate from and following planarization. (See Grieger, column 2, line 53 to column 3, line 15.) There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion otherwise in Grieger.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the rejections of Claims 8 and 9 have been overcome.

Claims 10-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Grieger. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The remarks above concerning Grieger are incorporated herein in this traversal. Just as Grieger fails to teach or suggest a method of planarizing a surface by directing onto said surface an aqueous solution containing ozone and causing relative motion of said surface and a polishing pad in contact therewith, it further fails to teach or suggest any such method comprising abrasive particles in said aqueous solution, any such method wherein abrasives particles in said aqueous solution are selected from any particular group, any such method comprising at least one ammonium salt in said aqueous solution, or any such method wherein at least one ammonium salt in said aqueous solution is ammonium carbonate. The washing method of Grieger simply employs an ozone and deionized water solution -- absolutely no additives are taught or suggested.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the rejections of claims 10-13 have been overcome.

Conclusion

Reconsideration of the restriction requirement has again been requested in view of Applicants' prior traversal and request for consideration that has not been addressed. Claims 1-13 define novel and non-obvious subject matter of the present invention. Therefore, an early notification that the application is in condition for allowance is earnestly solicited.

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